

David Wolfe 210
of the United States of America
A
COLLECTION OF PAPERS,
RELATIVE TO
H A L F - P A Y
A N D
C O M M U T A T I O N
O F
H A L F - P A Y,
GRANTED BY
C O N G R E S S
T O T H E
OFFICERS OF THE ARMY.

C O M P I L E D,

By Permission of His Excellency General WASHINGTON,
from the ORIGINAL PAPERS in his Possession.

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F I S H - K I L L:
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THE design of publishing the following collection of original papers, is to give the people of America an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the state of facts, respecting the half-pay and commutation, granted by Congress to the officers of the army; together with the reason, the necessity and policy which induced the measure.---The proceedings will explain themselves; ---the arguments offered at the moment need no comment;---and the consequences which have resulted from the system, give the strongest sanction to it.

EXTRACT of a REPRESENTATION made by General WASHINGTON to a COMMITTEE of CONGRESS, January 29. 1778.

Gentlemen,

THE numerous defects in our present military establishment, rendering many reformatiions and many new arrangements absolutely necessary, and Congress having been pleased to appoint you a Committee, in concert with me, to make and recommend such as shall appear eligible, in pursuance of the various objects expressed in their resolution for that purpose.--- I have in the following sheets, briefly delivered my sentiments upon such of them, as seemed to me most essential, so far, as observation has suggested, and leisure permitted.---There are submitted to consideration, and I shall be happy if they are found conducive to remedying the evils and inconveniences we are now subject to, and putting the army upon a more respectable footing. Something must be done,--important alterations must be made,---necessity requires that our resources should be enlarged and our system improved; for without it, if the dissolution of the army should not be the consequence, at least its operations must infallibly be feeble, languid and ineffectual.

As I consider a proper and satisfactory provision for officers, in a manner, as the basis of every other regulation and arrangement necessary to be made; since without officers no army can exist, and unless some measures be devised to place those of ours in a more desirable situation, few of them would be able, if willing, to continue in it.---I shall begin with a few reflections, tending to prove the necessity

OF A HALF-PAY ESTABLISHMENT.

A small knowledge of human nature will convince us, that, with far the greatest part of mankind, interest is the governing principle; and that, almost, every man is more or less under its influence. Motives of public virtue may for a time, or in particular instances, actuate men to the observance of a conduct purely disinterested; but they are not of themselves sufficient to produce a persevering conformity to the refined dictates and obligations of social duty.

Few men are capable of making a continual sacrifice of all views of private interest, or advantage, to common good.---It is in vain to exclaim against the depravity of human nature on this account---the fact is so, the

the experience of every age and nation has proved it; and we must, in a great measure, change the constitution of man, before we can make it otherwise. No institution, not built on the presumptive truth of these maxims, can succeed.

We find them exemplified in the American officers, as well as in all other men. At the commencement of the dispute,--in the first effusions of their zeal, and looking upon the service to be only temporary, they entered into it, without paying any regard to pecuniary or selfish considerations. But finding its duration to be much longer than they at first suspected, and that instead of deriving any advantage from the hardships and dangers to which they were exposed, they on the contrary, were losers by their patriotism, and fell far short even of a competency to supply their wants, they have gradually abated in their ardor; and with many, an entire disinclination to the service, under its present circumstances, has taken place. To this, in an eminent degree, must be ascribed the frequent resignations daily happening, and the more frequent importunities for permission to resign, and from some officers of the greatest merit. To this also may we ascribe the apathy, inattention and neglect of duty, which pervade all ranks, and which will necessarily continue and increase, while an officer, instead of gaining any thing, is impoverished by his commission; and conceives he is conferring, not receiving, a favor in holding it. There can be no sufficient tie upon men possessing such sentiments. Nor can any method be adopted to oblige those, to a punctual discharge of duty, who are indifferent about their continuance in the service, and are often seeking a pretext to disengage themselves from it. Punishment in this case will be unavailing; but when an officer's commission is made valuable to him, and he fears to lose it, you may then exact obedience from him. It is not indeed consistent with reason, or justice, to expect, that one set of men should make a sacrifice of property, domestic ease and happiness--encounter the rigours of the field--the perils and vicissitudes of war, to obtain those blessings which every citizen will enjoy, in common with them, without some adequate compensation. It must also be a comfortless reflection to any man, that after he may have contributed to securing the rights of his country, at the risk of his life, and the ruin of his fortune, there would be no provision made to prevent himself and family from sinking into indigence and wretchedness. Besides adopting some methods to make the provision for officers, equal to their present exigencies, a due regard should be paid to futurity. Nothing, in my opinion, would serve more powerfully to reanimate their languishing zeal, and interest them thoroughly in the service, than a half pay establishment. This would not only dispel the apprehension of personal distress, at the termination of the war, from having thrown themselves out of professions and employments, they might not have it in their power to resume; but would in a great degree, relieve the painful anticipation of leaving their widows and orphans.

phans a burthen on the charity of their country, should it be their lot to fall in its defence.

I am earnest in recommending this measure, because I know it is the general wish and expectation; and that many officers, whom, upon every principle we should wish to retain in the service, are only waiting to see whether something of the kind will, or will not take place, to be determined in their resolutions, either of staying in or quitting it immediately; and I urge my sentiments with the greater freedom because I cannot, and shall not, receive the smallest benefit from the establishment, and can have no other inducement for proposing it, than a full conviction of its utility and propriety.

I am sensible the expence will be a capital objection to it; but to this I oppose the necessity.---The officers are now discontented with their situation;---if some generous expedient is not embraced to remove their discontent, so extensive a desertion of the service will ensue, and so much discouragement be cast upon those who remain, as must wound it in a very essential manner: Every thing that has this effect, has a tendency at least to protract the war; and, though dictated by a well intended frugality, will, I fear, in the end, prove erroneous œconomy.

Congress being fully convinced of the propriety and necessity of making some further provision for the army, were pleased to pass the following resolutions:

IN CONGRESS, MAY 15, 1778.

Resolved, unanimously, That all military officers commissioned by Congress, who now are or hereafter may be in the service of the United States, and shall continue therein during the war, and not hold any office of profit under these States or any of them, shall after the conclusion of the war, be entitled to receive annually, for the term of seven years, if they live so long, one half of the present pay of such officers; provided that no general officer of the cavalry, artillery or infantry shall be entitled to receive more than the one half part of the pay of a Colonel of such corps respectively; and provided that this resolution shall not extend to any officer in the service of the United States, unless he shall have taken an oath of allegiance to, and shall actually reside within some of the United States.

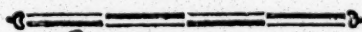
Resolved, unanimously, That every non commissioned military officer and soldier who hath enlisted, or shall enlist into the service of these States, for during the war, and shall continue therein to the end thereof,

of, shall be entitled to receive a further reward of eighty dollars at the expiration of the war*.

These resolutions, for a short time, produced the desired effect; but the encreasing distresses of the army, in the subsequent years, arising from the inability of the public to perform their engagements, caused such discontents and uneasinesses, that alarming consequences were feared; at the same time, the reform of the army, which was proposed to take place by the resolution of Congress of the 3d of October, 1780, ---not a little irritated their minds, already soured by disappointment. Under these circumstances the following part of a letter from the Commander in Chief was written to Congress:

TRANSCRIPT of a LETTER from General WASHINGTON to the PRESIDENT of CONGRESS, dated near Passaic-falls, October 11, 1780.

THAT there are the most conclusive reasons for reducing the number of regiments, no person acquainted with the situation of our affairs and the state of the army, will deny.---A want of officers, independent of other considerations, were sufficient to compel us.---But that the



* In addition to the foregoing resolutions, Congress were pleased to make the following resolve, calculated to afford that relief to the unfortunate and distressed, which humanity and gratitude demanded:

IN CONGRESS, AUGUST 24, 1780.

Resolved, That the resolution of the 15th day of May, 1778, granting half-pay for seven years, to the officers of the army who should continue in service to the end of the war, be extended to the widows of those officers who have died or shall hereafter die in the service, to commence from the time of such officer's death, and continue for the term of seven years; or if there be no widow, or in case of her death or intermarriage, the said half-pay be given to the orphan children of the officer dying as aforesaid, if he shall have left any; and that it be recommended to the legislatures of the respective states to which such officers belong, to make provision for paying the same on account of the United States.

the temper of the army, produced by its sufferings, requires great caution, in any reforms that are attempted, is a position not less evident than the former. In services the best established, where the hands of government are strengthened by the strongest interests of the army to submission, the reducing its regiments, and dismissing great part of its officers, is always a measure of delicacy and difficulty. In ours, where the officers are held by the feeblest ties, and are mouldering away by daily resignations, it is peculiarly so.---The last reduction occasioned many to quit the service, besides those who were reformed, and left durable seeds of discontent among those who remained.

The general topic of declamation was, that it was as hard as dishonorable for men, who had made every sacrifice to the service, to be turned out of it at the pleasure of those in power, without an adequate compensation. In the maturity to which their uneasinesses have now arisen, from a continuance in misery, they will be still more impatient under an attempt of a similar nature.---How far these dispositions may be reasonable, I pretend not to decide, but in the extremity to which we are arrived, policy forbids us to add new irritations.---Too many of the officers wish to get rid of their commissions, but they are not willing to be forced to it. It is not the intention of these remarks to discourage a reform, but to shew the necessity of guarding against the ill effects, by an ample provision, both for the officers who stay, and for those who are reduced :- This should be the basis of the plan, and without it, I apprehend the most mischievous consequences. This would obviate many scruples that will otherwise be found prejudicial in the extreme. I am convinced Congress are not a little straitened in the means of a present provision, so ample as to give satisfaction, but this proves the expediency of a future one,---and brings me to that which I have so frequently recommended, as the most oeconomic, the most politic and the most effectual that could be devised, a half-pay for life. Supported by a prospect of a permanent dependence, the officers would be tied to the service, and would submit to many momentary privations and to the inconveniences, which the situation of public affairs makes unavoidable. This is exemplified in the Pennsylvania officers, who being upon this establishment, are so much interested in the service, that in the course of many months there has been only one resignation in that line.

If the objection, drawn from the principle of this measure being incompatible with the genius of our government, is thought insurmountable, I would propose a substitute, less eligible in my opinion, but which may answer the purpose ; it is, to make the present half-pay for seven years, whole pay for the same period, to be advanced at two different payments, one half in a year after the conclusion of peace, the other half in two years subsequent to the first.

No objection to this measure occurs to me, except it be thought too great an expence; but in my judgment, whatever can give consistency to our military establishment, will be ultimately favourable to œconomy. It is not easy to be conceived, except by those who are witnesses to it, what an additional waste and consumption of every thing, and consequently what an encrease of expence, results from the laxness of discipline in the army. And where the officers think they are doing the public a favor, by holding their commissions, and the men are continually fluctuating, it is impossible to maintain discipline. Nothing can be to me more obvious, than that a sound military establishment, and the interest of œconomy, are the same. How much more the purposes of the war would be promoted by it, in other respects, will not admit of an argument.

In reasoning upon the measure of a future provision, I have heard gentlemen object, the want of it in some foreign armies, without advert- ing to the difference of circumstances. The military state holds the first rank in most of the countries of Europe, and is the road to honor and emolument. The establishment is permanent, and whatever be an officer's provision, it is for life,-- and he has a profession for life. He has future, as well as present motives of military honor and preferment; he is attached to the service, by the spirit of the government, by education, and in most cases, by early habit; his present condition, though not splendid, is comfortable, pensions and distinctions and particular privileges, are commonly his reward in retirement. In the case of the American officers, the military character has been suddenly taken up, and is to end with the war.

Congress will herewith receive a list of the officers in the New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Maryland line, previous to its marching to the southward, also Crane's and Lamb's artillery, Sheldon's horse, and in Hazen's, Sherburne's, Spencer's and Livingston's regiments, who have actually had their resignations entered at Head-Quarters, in the course of this year; and who in general urged their necessities, when they applied on the subject, and insisted, notwithstanding every persuasion to induce their continuance, that their circumstances would not admit of their remaining in service longer,--besides those resignations, there are a great many of which I have no certain account, as the officers being permitted to go home on furlough, in the course of the last winter, have never rejoined the army, and have only sent messages or written to their regimental officers, that their own distresses and those of their families would not permit their return.

As to the resignations which have taken place in the Virginia line, and the other troops at the southward, since they were acting in that quarter,

quarter, I have no account of them, but I make no doubt that many have happened.

All these serve to shew the necessity of some more competent establishment than the present one,---and I hold it my duty to mention, from the accounts I daily receive, unless this is the case, that I have strong reasons to believe, we shall not be able to retain, after the end of the campaign, as many officers, especially in some lines, as will be even sufficient for common duties when in quarters.

If matters fortunately should not proceed, to the lengths my fears forebode, yet Congress will be sensible, at the first view, of the injuries and great inconveniences, which must attend such a continual change of officers, and consequent promotions which are and will be inevitable.

Soon after Congress were pleased to pass the following resolutions:

IN C O N G R E S S, OCTOBER 21, 1780.

Resolved, That the Commander in Chief, and Commanding Officer in the southern department, direct the officers of each state to meet and agree upon the officers for the regiments to be raised by their respective states, from those who incline to continue in service; and, where it cannot be done by agreement, to be determined by seniority, and make return of those who are to remain, which is to be transmitted to Congress, together with the names of the officers reduced, who are to be allowed half-pay for life.

Resolved, That the officers who shall continue in the service to the end of the war, shall be entitled to half-pay during life, to commence from the time of their reduction.

These resolutions of Congress gave that satisfaction to the army which their wants and sufferings demanded, and the United States have since had no cause but to rejoice that their well timed generosity has produced the most happy effects, for it is well known to all who were conversant with the state of the army in the year 1780, that the ability of the public was totally inadequate to their just demands, and that any thing less than the resolutions which Congress passed at that time, would have put an end to the American opposition :---Since that period the army, confidentially relying on the resolutions of Congress, have endured hunger, poverty and want, without a murmur, and with

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cheerfulness

cheerfulness have encountered dangers which their profession demanded, knowing, that in some future period a generous public would pour the oil of gratitude into their wounds, and cause their grey hairs to rejoice ;---this confidence would have remained unshaken, if the ungrateful sentiments which had been frequently propagated by some interested persons, " That Congress did not mean to comply with their resolutions for half-pay," had not produced that uneasiness in the army which caused the following proceedings :

TO THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS
ASSEMBLED.

The ADDRESS and PETITION of the OFFICERS
of the ARMY of the UNITED STATES:

Humbly sheweth,

THAT we the officers of the army of the United States, in behalf of ourselves and our brethren the soldiers, beg leave with all proper deference and respect, freely to state to Congress, the supreme power of the United States, the great distress under which we labour.

At this present period of the war, it is with peculiar pain, we find ourselves constrained to address your august body on matters of a pecuniary nature.

We have struggled with our difficulties year after year, under the hopes that each would be last, but we have been disappointed. We find our embarrassments thicken so fast and have become so complex, that many of us are unable to go further.

In this exigence we apply to Congress for relief as our head and sovereign.

To prove that our hardships are exceedingly disproportionate to those of any other citizens of America, let a recurrence be had to the Paymaster's accompts for four years past.---If to this it should be objected, that the respective states have made settlements and given securities for the pay due for part of that time, let the present value of those nominal obligations be ascertained by the monied men, and they will be found to be worth but little indeed ; and yet trifling as they are, many have been under the sad necessity of parting with them, to prevent their families from actually starving.

We

We complain that shadows have been offered to us, while the substance has been gleaned by every person bearing the mark of civil authority throughout the United States.--Our situation compels us to search for the cause of our extreme poverty.---The citizens murmur at the greatness of their taxes, and are astonished that no part reaches the army. The numerous demands which are between the first collectors and the soldiers swallow up the whole.

Our distresses are now brought to a point. We have borne all that we can bear, our property is expended---our private resources are at an end---and our friends are wearied out and disgusted with our incessant applications. We therefore most seriously and earnestly beg, that a supply of money may be forwarded to the army as soon as possible. The uneasiness of the soldiers, for want of pay, is great and dangerous; any further experiments on their patience, may have fatal effects.

The promised subsistence or ration of provisions consisted of certain articles, specified in kind and quantity; this ration, without regard, that we can conceive, to the health of the troops, has been frequently altered as necessity or convenience suggested, generally losing by the change some part of its substance. On an average, not more than seven or eight-tenths have been issued, the retained parts were for a short time paid for; but the business became troublesome to those who were to execute it.---For this or some other reasons, all regard to the dues, as they respected the soldiers, has been discontinued, (now and then a trifling gratuity excepted).---As these dues respected the officers, they were compensated during one year, and part of another, by an extra ration; as to the retained rations, the account for several years remained unsettled; there is a large balance due upon it; and a considerable sum for that of forage.

The clothing was another part of the soldiers hire---the arrearages on that score, for the year 1777, were paid off in continental money, when the dollar was worth about four-pence; the arrearages for the following years are unliquidated, and we apprehend scarcely thought of but by the army.---Whenever there has been a real want of means---any defect in system, or neglect in execution, in the departments of the army, we have inevitably been the sufferers, by hunger and nakedness, and by languishing in a hospital. We beg leave to urge an immediate adjustment of all dues; that, as great a part as possible be paid, and the remainder put on such a footing as will restore cheerfulness to the army, revive confidence in the justice and generosity of its constituents, and contribute to the very desirable effect of re-establishing public credit.

We are grieved to find that our brethren, who retired from service on half-pay under the resolution of Congress in 1780, are not only destitute of any effectual provision, but are become the objects of obloquy.---Their condition has a very discouraging aspect on us, who must sooner

or later retire, and, from every consideration of justice, gratitude and policy, demands attention and redress.

We regard the act of Congress respecting half-pay, as an honorable and just recompence for several years hard service, in which the health and fortunes of the officers have been worn down and exhausted.-- We see with chagrin the odious point of view, in which the citizens of too many of the states endeavour to place the men entitled to it.

We hope for the honor of human nature, that there are none, so hardened in the sin of ingratitude, as to deny the justice of the reward. We have reason to believe that the objection generally, is against the mode only.---To prevent therefore any altercations and distinctions which may tend to injure that harmony, which we ardently desire may reign throughout the community, we are willing to commute the half-pay pledged, for full pay for a certain number of years, or for a sum in gross, as shall be agreed on by the Committee sent with this address.

To the representation now made, the army have not a doubt that Congress will pay all that attention, which the serious nature of it requires. It would be criminal in the officers to conceal the general dissatisfaction which prevails, and is gaining ground in the army, from the pressure of evils and injuries, which, in the course of seven long years, have made their condition, in many instances, wretched.---They therefore entreat that Congress (to convince the army and the world, that the independence of America shall not be placed on the ruin of any particular class of citizens) will point out a mode for immediate redress. And in this we pray, that the disabled officers and soldiers, with the widows and orphans of those who have expended or may expend their lives in the service of their country, may be fully comprehended. We also beg, that some mode may be pointed out for the eventual payment of those soldiers, who are the subjects of the resolution of Congress of the 15th of May, 1778.

In consequence of which Congress were pleased to pass the following resolutions, viz.

BY THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS
ASSEMBLED, January 25th, 1783.

THE grand Committee, consisting of a member from each state, report that they have considered the contents of a memorial presented by the army, and find that they comprehend five different articles :

1st. Present

- 1st. Present pay.
- 2d. A settlement of accounts of the arrearages of pay, and security for what is due.
- 3d. A commutation of the half-pay allowed by different resolutions of Congress for an equivalent in gros.
- 4th. A settlement of the accounts of deficiencies of rations and compensation.
- 5th. A settlement of the accounts of deficiencies of clothing and compensation.

Whereupon, *Resolved*, As to the first, that the Superintendant of Finance be directed, conformable to the measures already taken for that purpose, as soon as the state of the public finances will permit, to make such payment, and in such manner, as he shall think proper, till the further order of Congress.

Resolved, With respect to the second article, so far as relates to the settlement of accounts, that the several states be called upon to complete, without delay, the settlements with their respective lines of the army, up to the first day of August, 1780, and that the Superintendant of Finance be directed to take such measures as shall appear to him most proper for effecting the settlement from that period.

As to what relates to the providing security for what shall be found due on such settlement :

Resolved, That the troops of the United States, in common with all creditors of the same, have an undoubted right to expect such security; and that Congress will make every effort in their power, to obtain from the respective states, substantial funds, adequate to the object of funding the whole debt of the United States, and will enter upon an immediate and full consideration of the nature of such funds, and the most likely mode of obtaining them.

Ordered, That the remainder of the report be referred to a Committee of five.

Soon

Soon after the Committee of the army made the following general report to Major General Knox, with whom they had been directed to correspond on the subjects of the foregoing petition to Congress.

PHILADELPHIA, 8th February, 1783.

DEAR SIR,

THE army has, no doubt, been anxious to hear from us, and we should have had as much pleasure in communicating to them any success of our application for them, as they are to receive it: But nothing of any moment has yet been decided for them. We spent the first week, after our arrival, in conversing with the members of Congress on the subject of the address; to prepare them for the reception of it before it was read, lest the want of information should retard a favorable resolution on it. On its being read, a Committee was appointed to confer with us, consisting of a member from each state, but Georgia; which was unrepresented, and had no member attending. The Financier attended at this meeting. To this Committee we communicated the condition of the army, and we dilated very diffusely all the subjects stated in the address; indeed truth and decency were the only bounds observed in our conference with them. The reason of our applying to Congress to determine on a compensation for half-pay, was also minutely detailed.

The result as to present pay, will be communicated to you by Colonel Brooks. On this subject we can only commit to paper, that a months pay in notes to the officers, and one to the non-commissioned and privates, at weekly payments of half a dollar per week to the latter, is all that can be now obtained. This grand Committee appointed a Subcommittee to converse with us, as occasion should require, if any new matter occurred to us; and to inspect critically into the principles of annuities, in order to determine on an equivalent for the half-pay.

In about ten days they reported to the grand Committee, that twelve years was a mean life of the ages of the officers of the army; and that six whole years pay was equal to the country and the army, to the half-pay for life. The Committee then reported to Congress, which produced the resolutions which have been transmitted to the Commander in Chief. That part of the report which respected the value of the half-pay, was recommitted to a smaller Committee, the number of years being considered too many.

This committee took up some time to examine calculations on annuities, and two days ago they reported five years whole pay as equal to the half-pay for life, but nine states would not approve the report,
Georgia,

Georgia, Maryland and Delaware unrepresented. We advised our friends not to press for a determination, if they could not carry the question, as the sense of Maryland and Delaware were known to be favourable to us, and their delegates were daily expected in town.--- On discussion in Congress, some of the members opposed to the commutation, and equally so to half-pay, expressed a desire to put off the question, to give them time for more consideration; it was accordingly granted. Thus stands the matter of commutation.

Massachusetts, New-York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North and South-Carolina were for the equivalent; New-Hampshire, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, and Jersey were against it. There is some prospect of getting one or more of these states to vote for the commutation. If this is accomplished, with Maryland and Delaware, the question will be carried. whenever it is, as the report now stands, it will be at the election of a line, as such, to accept of the commutation or retain their claim to the half-pay, Congress being determined that no alteration shall take place in the emolument held out to the army, but by their consent.

This rendered it unnecessary for us to consult the army on the equivalent for the half-pay.---The zeal of a great number of members of Congress to get continental funds, while a few wished to have us referred to the states, induced us to conceal what funds we wished, or expected, lest our declaration for one or the other, might retard a settlement of our accounts, or a determination on the equivalent for the half-pay. Indeed some of our best friends in Congress declared, however desirous they were to have our accounts settled, and the commutation fixed, as well as to get funds, yet they would oppose referring us to the states for a settlement and security, till all prospect of obtaining continental funds was at an end.

Whether this is near or not, as commutation for the half-pay was one of the principal objects of the address, the obtaining of that is necessary, previous to our particularizing what fund will be most agreeable to us: This must be determined by circumstances.---If Congress get funds we shall be secured. If not, the equivalent settled, a principal will be established, which will be more acceptable to the eastern states than half-pay, if application must be made to them.---As it is not likely that Congress will be able to determine soon on the commutation (for the reasons above mentioned;) it is judged necessary that Colonel Brooks return to the army, to give them a more particular detail of our prospects than can be done in the compass of a letter. It is however thought proper that General M^r Dougal should remain in Philadelphia, to endeavour at a proper time to bring on the determination of Congress, on the important question; as well as to quicken the accomplishment of the other points contained in the address. In the mean time Colonel Ogden

den visits his family, as well as to do some business which will greatly promote the object of our being sent here. Colonel Ogden will however return if it should be judged necessary. We conceived it expedient to make the army this general report, and beg leave to refer you to Colonel Brooks for a more particular one.

We are,

SIR,

With great truth,

Your affectionate humble servants,

ALEX. M^c DOUGAL.

M. OGDEN.

(Signed)

Major-General KNOX.

On the 10th of March the following anonymous notification made its appearance, and was accompanied by an anonymous address to the officers of the army, which is subjoined:

No. I.

A Meeting of the general and field officers is requested at the Public Building on Tuesday next, 11 o'clock.---A commissioned officer from each company is expected, and a delegate from the medical staff. The object of this convention is to consider the late letter from our representatives in Philadelphia, and what measure (if any) should be adopted to obtain that redress of grievances which they seem to have solicited in vain.

No. II.

TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMY.

Gentlemen,

A FELLOW-SOLDIER, whose interest and affections bind him strongly to you, whose past sufferings have been as great, and whose future fortunes may be as desperate as yours---would beg leave to address you.

Age has its claims, and rank is not without its pretensions to advise; but though unsupported by both, he flatters himself, that the plain language of sincerity and experience, will neither be unheard nor unregarded.

Like many of you, he loved private life, and left it with regret.---He left it, determined to retire from the field, with the necessity that called

led him to it, and not till then,---not till the enemies of his country, the slaves of power and the hirelings of injustice, were compelled to abandon their schemes, and acknowledge America as terrible in arms, as she had been humble in remonstrance.---With this object in view, he has long shared in your toils, and mingled in your dangers,---he has felt the cold hand of poverty, without a murmur, and has seen the intolerance of wealth, without a sigh.---But too much under the direction of his wishes, and sometimes weak enough to mistake desire for opinion, he has till lately, very lately, believed in the justice of his country.---He hoped that as the clouds of adversity scattered, and as the sunshine of peace and better fortune broke in upon us,---the coldness and severity of government would relax, and that more than justice, that gratitude, would blaze forth upon those hands, which had upheld her, in the darkest stages of her passage, from impending servitude, to acknowledged independence.

But faith has its limits as well as temper, and there are points, beyond which neither can be stretched without sinking into cowardice, or plunging into credulity.---This, my friends, I conceive to be your situation---hurried to the very verge of both, another step would ruin you for ever.---To be tame and unprovoked, when injuries press hard upon you, is more than weakness, but to look up for kinder usage, without one manly effort of your own, would fix your character, and shew the world, how richly you deserve those chains you broke. To guard against this evil, let us take a view of the ground upon which we now stand, and from thence carry our thoughts forward, for a moment, into the unexplored field of expedient.

After a pursuit of seven long years, the object for which we set out, is at length brought within our reach.---Yes, my friends, that suffering courage of yours, was active once; it has conducted the United States of America, through a doubtful and a bloody war---it has placed her in the chair of independency, and peace returns again to bless--Whom? A country willing to redress your wrongs, cherish your worth, and reward your services?---A country courting your return to private life, with tears of gratitude and smiles of admiration?---longing to divide with you that independency which your gallantry has given, and those riches which your wounds have preserved?---Is this the case? Or is it rather a country that tramples upon your rights, disdains your cries, and insults your distresses?---have you not more than once suggested your wishes, and made known your wants to Congress (wants and wishes which gratitude and policy should have anticipated, rather than evaded;) and have you not lately, in the meek language of entreating memorials, begged from their justice what you could no longer expect from their favour? How have you been answered? --let the letter which you are called to consider to-morrow, make reply!--If this then be your treat-

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ment,

present, while the swords you wear are necessary for the defence of America, what have you to expect from peace; when your voice shall sink, and your strength dissipate by division---when those very swords, the instruments and companions of your glory, shall be taken from your sides, and no remaining mark of military distinction left, but your wants, infirmities and scars.---Can you then consent to be the only sufferers by this revolution,---and retiring from the field, grow old in poverty, wretchedness and contempt?---Can you consent to wade through the vile mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honor?---If you can---Go---and carry with you, the jest of Tories, and the scorn of Whigs---the ridicule, and what is worse---the pity of the world.---Go---starve and be forgotten.---But if your spirits should revolt at this, if you have sense enough to discover, and spirit sufficient to oppose tyranny, under whatever garb it may assume---whether it be the plain coat of republicanism---or the splendid robe of royalty;---if you have yet learned to discriminate, between a people and a cause---between men and principles,---awake, attend to your situation, and redress yourselves. If the present moment be lost, every future effort is in vain---your threats then, will be as empty, as your entreaties now. I would advise you therefore, to come to some final opinion, of what you can bear and what you will suffer. If your determination be in any proportion to your wrongs--carry your appeal from the justice to the fears of government. Change the milk and water stile of your last memorial.---Assume a bolder tone, decent, but lively, spirited and determined;---and suspect the man who would advise to more moderation, and longer forbearance. Let two or three men, who can feel as well as write, be appointed to draw up your last remonstrance (for I would no longer give it the sueing, soft, unsuccessful epithet of memorial.) Let it represent in language, that will neither dishonour you by its rudeness, nor betray you by its fears---what has been promised by Congress, and what has been performed;---how long and how patiently you have suffered---how little you have asked, and how much of that little has been denied.---Tell them, that though you were the first, and would wish to be last, to encounter danger---though despair itself can never drive you into dishonor, it may drive you from the field.---That the wound often irritated and never healed, may at length become incurable,---and that the slightest mark of indignity from Congress now, must operate like the grave, and part you forever. That in any political event, the army has its alternative.---If peace, that nothing shall separate you from your arms but death.---If war, that courting the auspices, and inviting the direction of your illustrious leader, you will retire to some yet unsettled country, smile in your turn, "and mock when their fear cometh on."---But let it represent also, that should they comply with the request of your late memorial, it would make you more happy, and them more respectable.---That while

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the war should continue, you would follow their standard in the field--- and that when it came to an end, you would withdraw into the shade of private life, and give the world another subject of wonder and applause--- an army victorious over its enemies---victorious over itself.

In consequence of the preceding papers, the subsequent orders were issued :

No. III.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH; *March 11, 1783.*

THE Commander in Chief, having heard that a general meeting of the officers of the army, was propoted to be held this day at the New Building, in an anonymous paper which was circulated yesterday by some unknown person, conceives (although he is fully persuaded that the good sense of the officers would induce them to pay very little attention to such irregular invitation) his duty as well as the reputation and true interests of the army, require his disapprobation of such disorderly proceedings ; at the same time, he requests the general and field officers, with one officer from each company, and a proper representation of the staff of the army, will assemble at 12 o'clock on Saturday next at the New Building, to hear the report of the Committee of the army to Congress.

After mature deliberation, they will devise what further measures ought to be adopted, as most rational, and best calculated, to attain the just and important object in view.

The senior officer in rank present, will be pleased to preside, and report the result of the deliberation to the Commander in Chief.

The next evening the following anonymous address marked No. II, was dispersed through the army :

No. IV.

TO THE OFFICERS OF THE ARMY.

Gentlemen,

THE author of the late address, anxious to deserve, though he should fail to engage, your esteem, and determined at every risk, to unfold your duty, and discharge his own---would beg leave to solicit the farther indulgence of a few moments attention.

Aware--

Aware of the coyness with which his last letter would be received; he feels himself neither disappointed, nor displeased with the caution, it has met.---He well knew, that it spoke a language, which till now, had been heard only in whispers; and that it contained some sentiments, which confidence itself would have breathed with distrust.---But their lives have been short, and their observation imperfect indeed, who have yet to learn, that alarms may be false,---that the best designs are sometimes obliged to assume the worst aspect; and that however synonymous, surprise and disaster may be in military phrase, in moral and political meaning, they convey ideas, as different as they are distinct.---*Suspicion*, detestable as it is in private life, is the loveliest trait of political characters. It prompts to enquiry, bars the door against design, and opens every avenue to truth. It was the first to oppose a tyrant here, and still stands sentinel over the liberties of America.---With this belief, it would illy become me, to stifle the voice of this honest guardian.---A guardian who (authorized by circumstance, digested into proof) has herself given birth to the address you have read, and now goes forth among you, with a request to all, that it may be treated fairly,---that it may be considered, before it be abused---and condemned, before it be tortured;---convinced that, in a search after error, truth will appear; that apathy itself will grow warm in the pursuit, and though it will be the last to adopt her advice, it will be the first to act upon it.

The general order of yesterday, which the weak may mistake for disapprobation, and the designing dare to represent as such, wears, in my opinion, a very different complexion, and carries with it a very opposite tendency.

Till now, the Commander in Chief has regarded the steps you have taken for redress, with good wishes alone,---his ostensible silence has authorized your meetings, and his private opinion has sanctified your claims. Had he disliked the object in view, would not the same sense of duty, which forbade your meeting on the third day of the week, have forbidden you from meeting on the seventh?-----Is not the same subject held up for your discussion, and has it not passed the seal of office, and taken all the solemnity of an order?---This will give system to your proceedings, and stability to your resolves. It will ripen speculation into fact, and while it adds to the unanimity, it cannot possibly lessen the *independency*, of your sentiments. It may be necessary to add upon this subject, that from the injunction with which the general orders close, every man is at liberty to conclude, that the *report* to be made to *Head-Quarters*, is intended for *Congress*. Hence will arise another motive for that *energy*, which has been recommended. For, can you give the lie to the pathetic descriptions of our representations, and the more alarming predictions of your friends?

To such as make a want of signature, an objection to opinion, I reply,

ply,---that it matters very little, who is the author of sentiments, which grow out of your feelings and apply to your wants. That in this instance diffidence suggested what experience enjoins; and that, while I continue to move on the high road of argument and advice (which is open to all) I shall continue to be the sole confident of my own secret. But should the time come, when it shall be necessary to depart from this general line, and hold up any individual among you as an object of the resentment or contempt of the rest, I thus publicly pledge my honour as a soldier, and veracity as a man, that I will then assume a visible existence, and give my name to the army, with as little reserve, as I now give my opinions. I am, &c.

The four preceding papers were transmitted to Congress by the Commander in Chief, in his letter of the 12th March, which was conceived in the following words, viz.

HEAD QUARTERS, *March* 12th, 1783.

S I R,

I T is with inexpressible concern I make the following report to your Excellency.

Two days ago, anonymous notifications were circulated in the army, requesting a general meeting of the officers next day, a copy of one of these papers is enclosed, marked No. I. About the same time another anonymous writing, purporting to be an address to the officers of the army, was handed about in a clandestine manner, it is also enclosed and marked No. II. To prevent any precipitate and dangerous resolutions from being taken at this perilous moment, while the passions were all inflamed,---as soon as these things had come to my knowledge,---the next morning I issued the enclosed order, No. III. and in this situation the affair now rests.

As all opinion must be suspended until after the meeting, on Saturday next,---I have nothing further to add, except a wish that the measure I have taken to dissipate a storm, which has gathered so suddenly and unexpectedly, may be acceptable to Congress; and to assure them, that in every vicissitude of circumstances, still actuated with the greatest zeal in their service, I shall continue my utmost exertions to promote the welfare of my country, under the most lively expectation, that Congress have the best intention of doing ample justice to the army, as soon as circumstances will possibly admit.

I have the honor to be, &c.

N. B. Since writing the foregoing, another anonymous paper is put in circulation, and is enclosed No. IV.

His Excellency the PRESIDENT of CONGRESS.

And

And on the 16th of the same month, the Commander in Chief wrote the following letter to his Excellency the President of Congress:

HEAD-QUARTERS, 16th March, 1783.

S I R,

I HAVE the honor to inform your Excellency, for the satisfaction of Congress, that the meeting of the officers which was mentioned in my last, has been held yesterday,---that it has terminated in a manner which I had reason to expect, from a knowledge of that good sense and steady patriotism of the gentlemen of the army, which on frequent occasions I have discovered.

The report of the meeting, with the other papers which will be necessary to accompany it, I shall do myself the honor to transmit to Congress, as soon as they can possibly be prepared.

I have the honor to be, &c.

On the 18th General WASHINGTON expressed his approbation in the following public orders:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH, March 18, 1783.

THE Commander in Chief is highly satisfied with the report of the proceedings of the officers assembled on the 15th instant; in obedience to the orders of the 11th.---He begs his inability to communicate an adequate idea of the pleasing feelings which have been excited in his breast, by the affectionate sentiments expressed towards him on that occasion, may be considered as an apology for his silence.

On the 18th March, the following letter from the Commander in Chief was written to Congress:

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH, March 18th, 1783.

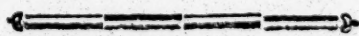
S I R,

THE result of the proceedings of the grand convention of officers, which I have the honor of enclosing to your Excellency for the inspection of Congress, will, I flatter myself, be considered as the last glorious proof of patriotism, which could have been given by men who aspired to the distinction of a patriot army, and will not only confirm their

their claim to the justice, but will encrease their title to the gratitude of their country.

Having seen the proceedings on the part of the army, terminate with perfect unanimity, and in a manner entirely consonant to my wishes; being impressed with the liveliest sentiments of affection for those, who have so long, so patiently and so cheerfully suffered and fought under my immediate direction, having from motives of justice, duty and gratitude, spontaneously offered myself, as an advocate for their rights; and having been requested to write to your Excellency, earnestly entreating the most speedy decision of Congress upon the subjects of the late address from the army to that honorable body,--it now only remains for me to perform the task I have assumed,--and to intercede in their behalf as I now do, that the sovereign power will be pleased to verify the predictions I have pronounced of, and the confidence the army have reposed in, the justice of their country.--And here, I humbly conceive it is altogether unnecessary (while I am pleading the cause of an army which have done and suffered more than any other army ever did, in the defence of the rights and liberties of human nature) to expatiate on their *claims* to the most ample compensation for their meritorious services,---because they are perfectly known to the whole world,--and because (although the topics are inexhaustible) enough has already been said on the subject. To prove these assertions, to evince that my sentiments have ever been uniform, and to shew what my ideas of the rewards in question have always been,---I appeal to the archives of Congress, and call on those sacred deposits to witness for me.---And in order that my observations and arguments, in favor of a future adequate provision for the officers of the army, may be brought to remembrance again, and considered in a single point of view, without giving Congress the trouble of having recourse to their files; I will beg leave to transmit herewith, an extract from a representation made by me to a Committee of Congress, so long ago as the 29th of January, 1778 *.---and also the transcript of a letter to the President of Congress, dated near Passaick-Falls, October 11, 1780 †.

That in the critical and perilous moment when the last mentioned communication was made, there was the utmost danger, a dissolution of the army would have taken place, unless measures similar to those recommended, had been adopted, will not admit a doubt. That the adoption of the resolution, granting half pay for life, has been attended with all the happy consequences I had foretold, so far as respected the good of the service, let the astonishing contrast between the state of the army at this instant, and at the former period determine. And that



* See Page 3.

† See Page 6.

that the establishment of funds, and securities for the payment of all the just demands of the army, will be the most certain means of preserving the national faith and future tranquility of this extensive continent, is my decided opinion.

By the preceding remarks it will readily be imagined that instead of retracting and reprehending (from farther experience and reflection) the mode of compensation so strenuously urged in the enclosures, I am more and more confirmed in the sentiment,---and if in the wrong, suffer me to please myself with the grateful delusion.

For if, besides the simple payment of their wages, a farther compensation is not due to the sufferings and sacrifices of the officers,--then have I been mistaken indeed;-- if the whole army have not merited, whatever a grateful people can bestow, then I have been beguiled by prejudice, and built opinion on the basis of error. If this country should not in the event, perform every thing which has been requested, in the late memorial to Congress, then will my belief become vain, and the hope that has been excited void of foundation. And if (as has been suggested for the purpose of inflaming their passions) the officers of the army, are to be the only sufferers by this revolution,---if, "retiring from the field they are to grow old in poverty, wretchedness and contempt,---if they are to wade through the vile mire of dependency, and owe the miserable remnant of that life to charity, which has hitherto been spent in honor,"---then shall I have learned what ingratitude is, then shall I have realized a tale, which will embitter every moment of my future life:--- But I am under no such apprehensions, a country rescued by their arms from impending ruin, will never leave unpaid the debt of gratitude.

Should any intemperate or improper warmth, have mingled itself amongst the foregoing observations,---I must entreat your Excellency and Congress, it may be attributed to the effusion of an honest zeal in the best of causes, and that my peculiar situation may be my apology:---and I hope I need not, on this momentous occasion, make any new protestations, of personal disinterestedness, having ever renounced for myself, the idea of pecuniary reward.---The consciousness of having attempted, faithfully to discharge my duty, and the approbation of my country, will be a sufficient recompence for my services.

I have the honor to be,

With perfect respect,

Your Excellency's

Most obedient servant.

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The papers enclosed in the preceding letter, are annexed, except the extract from a representation made by General Washington to a Committee of Congress, January 29th, 1778, which is inserted in the third page; and also the transcript of a letter from General Washington to the President of Congress, dated near Passaick Falls, October 11th, 1780, which likewise may be seen at page six.

REPORT of the CONVENTION of OFFICERS, held at the Cantonment, 15th March, 1783.

A GREEABLE to the order of the 11th instant the officers of the American army being convened. The honorable Major-General Gates President.

His Excellency the Commander in Chief was pleased to open the meeting with the following address to them, on the subject of their being called to together; which with some other papers were left for the consideration of the assembly.

Gentlemen,

BY an anonymous summons, an attempt has been made to convene you together,---how inconsistent with the rules of propriety! how unmilitary! and how subversive of all good order and discipline!--let the good sense of the army decide!

In the moment of this summons, another anonymous production was sent into circulation; addressed more to the feelings and passions, than to the reason and judgment of the army. The author of the piece, is entitled to much credit for the goodness of his pen, and I could wish he had as much credit for the rectitude of his heart; for as men see through different optics, and are induced by the reflecting faculties of the mind, to use different means to obtain the same end,---the author of the address, should have had more charity, than to mark for suspicion, the man, who should recommend moderation and longer forbearance,---or in other words, who should not think as he thinks, and act as he advises.---But he had another plan in view, in which candor and liberality of sentiment, regard to justice, and love of country, have no part; and he was right to insinuate the darkest suspicion, to effect the blackest designs.

That the address is drawn with great art, and is designed to answer the most insidious purposes, that it is calculated to impress the mind,
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with an idea of premeditated injustice in the sovereign power of the United States, and rouse all those resentments, which must unavoidably flow from such a belief,--that the secret mover of this scheme (whoever he may be) intended to take advantage of the passions, while they were warmed, by the recollection of past distresses, without giving time for cool, deliberate thinking, and that composure of mind, which is so necessary to give dignity and stability to measures, is rendered too obvious, by the mode of conducting the business, to need other proof, than a reference to the proceeding.

Thus much, Gentlemen, I have thought it incumbent on me to observe to you, to shew upon what principles, I opposed the irregular and hasty meeting, which was proposed to have been held on Tuesday last, and not because, I wanted a disposition to give you every opportunity, consistent with your own honor, and the dignity of the army, to make known your grievances.---If my conduct heretofore has not evinced to you that I have been a faithful friend to the army, my declaration of it at this time, would be equally unavailing and improper; but as I was among the first who embarked in the cause of our common country; as I have never left your side one moment, but when called from you on public duty; as I have been the constant companion and witness of your distresses, and not among the last to feel and acknowledge your merits; as I have ever considered my own military reputation, as inseparably connected with that of the army; as my heart has ever expanded with joy, when I have heard its praises, and my indignation has arisen, when the mouth of detraction has been opened against it,--it can *scarcely be supposed*, at this late stage of the war, that I am indifferent to its interests.---But---how are they to be promoted?---The way is plain, says the anonymous addresser---if war continues, remove into the unsettled country,---there establish yourselves, and leave an ungrateful country to defend itself.--But who are they to defend?---Our wives, our children, our farms and other property which we leave behind us?---Or, in the state of hostile separation, are we to take the two first (the latter cannot be removed) to perish in a wilderness with hunger, cold and nakedness?---If peace takes place, never sheath your swords (says he) until you have obtained full and ample justice:---This dreadful alternative, of either deserting our country, in the extremest hour of distress, or turning our arms against it, (which is the apparent object, unless Congress can be compelled into instant compliance) has something so shocking in it,---that humanity revolts at the idea.---My God!---what can this writer have in view by recommending such measures? Can he be a friend to the army? Can he be a friend to this country? --Rather is he not an insidious foe?---some emissary, perhaps, from New-York, plotting the ruin of both, by sowing the seeds of discord and separation between the civil and military powers of the continent?---and what a compliment does

he pay to our understandings, when he recommends measures, in either alternative, impracticable in their nature?

But here, Gentlemen, I will drop the curtain,---because it would be as imprudent in me, to assign my reasons for this opinion, as it would be insulting to your conception, to suppose you stood in need of them. ---A moment's reflection, will convince every dispassionate mind, of the physical impossibility, of carrying either proposal into execution.

There might, Gentlemen, be an impropriety in my taking notice, in this address to you, of an anonymous production,---but the manner in which that performance has been introduced to the army,---the effect it was intended to have, together with some other circumstances, will amply justify my observations, on the tendency of that writing. With respect to the advice given by the author to suspect the man, who shall recommend moderate measures and longer forbearance, I spurn it,---as every man who regards that liberty, and reveres that justice, for which we contend, undoubtedly must.---For if men are to be precluded from offering their sentiments on a matter, which may involve the most serious and alarming consequences, that can invite the consideration of mankind, reason is of no use to us; --the freedom of speech may be taken away, and dumb and silent, we may be led like sheep to the slaughter.

I cannot in justice to my own belief, and what I have great reason to conceive is the intention of Congress, conclude this address, without giving it as my decided opinion, that that honorable body, entertain exalted sentiments of the services of the army, and from a full conviction of its merits and sufferings, will do it complete justice. That their endeavours to discover and establish funds for this purpose, have been unwearied, and will not cease, till they have succeeded, I have no doubt; but, like all other large bodies, where there is a variety of different interests to reconcile, their deliberations are slow.---Why then should we distrust them? and, in consequence of that distrust, adopt measures, which may cast a shade, over that glory which has been so justly acquired, and tarnish the reputation of an army, which is celebrated through all Europe, for its fortitude and patriotism? and for what is this done?---to bring the object we seek nearer?---No!---most certainly, in my opinion, it will cast it at a greater distance.

For myself (and I take no merit in giving the assurance, being induced to it from principles of gratitude, veracity and justice)---a grateful sense of the confidence you have ever placed in me, a recollection of the cheerful assistance, and prompt obedience I have experienced from you, under every vicissitude of fortune, and the sincere affection I feel for an army, I have so long had the honor to command,-- will oblige me to declare, in this public and solemn manner; that, in the attainment of
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complete justice, for all your toils and dangers, and in the gratification of every wish, so far as may be done consistently with the great duty I owe my country, and those powers we are bound to respect, you may freely command my services to the utmost extent of my abilities.

While I give you these assurances, and pledge myself in the most unequivocal manner, to exert whatever ability I am possessed of, in your favour, let me intreat you, Gentlemen, on your part, not to take any measures, which, viewed in the calm light of reason, will lessen the dignity, and fully the glory you have hitherto maintained. Let me request you, to rely on the plighted faith of your country, and place a full confidence in the purity of the intentions of Congress, that previous to your dissolution as an army, they will cause all your accompts to be fairly liquidated, as directed in their resolutions which were published to you two days ago, and that they will adopt the most effectual measures in their power, to render ample justice to you, for your faithful and meritorious services. And let me conjure you in the name of our common country, as you value your own sacred honor, as you respect the rights of humanity, and as you regard the military and national character of America, to express your utmost horror and detestation of the man, who wishes under any specious pretences, to overturn the liberties of our country, and who wickedly attempts to open the flood-gates of civil discord, and deluge our rising empire in blood. By thus determining, and thus acting, you will pursue the plain and direct road to the attainment of your wishes; you will defeat the insidious designs of our enemies, who are compelled to resort from open force, to secret artifice; you will give one more distinguished proof of unexampled patriotism and patient virtue, rising superior to the pressure of the most complicated sufferings; and you will, by the dignity of your conduct, afford occasion for posterity to say, when speaking of the glorious example you have exhibited to mankind, had this day been wanting, the world had never seen the last stage of perfection, to which human nature is capable of attaining.

His Excellency having withdrawn.---On motion made by General Knox, and seconded by General Putnam,

Resolved, That the unanimous thanks of the officers of the army be presented to his Excellency the Commander in Chief, for his excellent address, and the communications he has been pleased to make to them; and to assure him, that the officers reciprocate his affectionate expressions, with the greatest sincerity of which the human heart is capable.

The address from the army to Congress, the report of the Committee from the army, and the resolutions of Congress of the 25th of January being read,---on a motion by General Putnam, seconded by General Hand,

Noted,

Voted, That a Committee be appointed immediately to draw up some resolutions, expressive of the business before us, and report in half an hour; that this Committee consist of one General, one Field Officer and one Captain :

That General Knox, Colonel Brooks, and Captain Howard, compose the said Committee.

The report of the Committee having been brought in, and fully considered.

Resolved unanimously, That at the commencement of the present war, the officers of the American army, engaged in the service of their country from the purest love, and attachment to the rights and liberties of human nature ; which motives still exist in the highest degree ; and that no circumstance of distress or danger, shall induce a conduct, that may tend to sully the reputation and glory, which they have acquired at the price of their blood, and eight years faithful services.

Resolved unanimously, That the army continue to have an unshaken confidence in the justice of Congress and their country ; and are fully convinced that the representatives of America will not disband or disperse the army, until their accounts are liquidated, the balances accurately ascertained, and adequate funds established for payment.

And in this arrangement the officers expect that the half-pay, or commutation of it, should be efficaciously comprehended.

Resolved unanimously, That his Excellency the Commander in Chief be requested to write to his Excellency the President of Congress, earnestly entreating the more speedy decision of that honorable body, upon the subjects of our late address, which was forwarded by a Committee of the army, some of whom are waiting upon Congress for the result. In the alternative of peace or war, this event would be highly satisfactory, and would produce immediate tranquility in the minds of the army ; and prevent any further machinations of designing men, to sow discord between the civil and military powers of the United States.

Resolved unanimously, That the officers of the American army view with abhorrence, and reject with disdain, the infamous propositions contained in a late anonymous address to the officers of the army, and resent with indignation, the secret attempts of some unknown persons, to collect the officers together, in a manner totally subversive of all discipline and good order.

Resolved unanimously, That the thanks of the officers of the army be given to the Committee, who presented to Congress the late address of the army, for the wisdom and prudence with which they have conducted that business ; and that a copy of the proceedings of this day be transmitted.

mitted by the President to Major-General M'Dougal; and that he be requested to continue his solicitations at Congress, until the objects of his mission are accomplished.

The meeting was then dissolved.

HORATIO GATES, Major-General, President.

Previous to the receipt of the foregoing letter, with its enclosures,--- Congress were pleased to pass the following resolutions :

MARCH 18th, 1783.

BY THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS
ASSEMBLED.

On a report of a Committee, to whom was referred a letter of the 12th of March from the Commander in Chief :

Ordered, That the Superintendent of Finance lay before Congress an account of the payments made to the army, in consequence of the resolution of the 25th day of January last,---and what sums the state of the public finances will enable him to pay to the army at present; and also that he communicate to Congress what steps have been taken, towards settling the accounts of the army since the said resolution.

CHARLES THOMSON, Secretary.

MARCH 22d, 1783.

BY THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS
ASSEMBLED.

On the report of a Committee, to whom was referred a motion of Mr. Dyer, together with the memorial of the army, and report of the Committee thereon;---Congress came to the following resolutions :

Whereas the officers of the several lines, under the immediate command of his Excellency General Washington, did by their late memorial transmitted, represent to Congress, that the half-pay granted by sundry resolutions, was regarded in an unfavourable light by the citizens of some of these states, who would prefer a compensation for a limited term of years, or by a sum in gross, to an establishment for life; and did on that account, solicit a commutation of their half-pay, for an equivalent in one of the modes above-mentioned, in order to remove all subjects of dissatisfaction from the minds of their fellow citizens.---And whereas Congress are desirous, as well of gratifying the reasonable expectations of the officers of the army, as of removing all objections which may exist in any part of the United States, to the principles of the half-pay

half-pay establishment, for which the faith of the United States hath been pledged, persuaded that those objections can only arise from the nature of the compensation, not from any indisposition to compensate those, whose services, sacrifices and sufferings, have so justly a title to the approbation and rewards of their country : Therefore,

Resolved, That such officers as are now in service, and shall continue therein to the end of the war, shall be entitled to receive the amount of five years full pay in money or securities, on interest at six per cent per annum, as Congress shall find most convenient, instead of the half-pay promised for life, by the resolution of the 21st day of October, 1780.---the said securities to be such as shall be given to the creditors of the United States : Provided that it be at the option of the lines of the respective states, and not of officers individually in those lines, to accept or refuse the same; and provided also, that their election shall be signified to Congress through the Commander in Chief, from the lines under his immediate command, within two months; and through the commanding officer of the southern army, from those under his command, within six months from the date of this resolution :

That the same commutation shall extend to the corps not belonging to the lines of particular states, and who are entitled to half-pay for life as aforesaid; the acceptance or refusal to be determined by corps, and to be signified in the same manner, and within the same time, as above-mentioned :

That all officers belonging to the hospital department, who are entitled to half-pay by the resolution of the 17th day of January, 1781, may collectively agree to accept or refuse the aforesaid commutation, signifying the same through the Commander in Chief, within six months from this time :

That such officers as have retired at different periods, entitled to half-pay for life, may collectively, in each state of which they are inhabitants, accept or refuse the same, their acceptance or refusal to be signified by agents authorised for that purpose, within six months from this period : That with respect to such retiring officers, the commutation, if accepted by them, shall be in lieu of whatever may be now due to them since the time of their retiring from service, as well as of what might hereafter become due ; and that so soon as their acceptance shall be signified, the Superintendent of Finance be, and he is hereby directed to take measures for the settlement of their accompts accordingly, and to issue to them certificates bearing interest at six per cent :

That all officers entitled to half pay for life, not included in the preceding resolution, may also collectively agree, to accept or refuse the aforesaid commutation, signifying the same within six months from this time.

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Just at the moment when Congress had given their sanction to the act of commutation, intelligence arrived that the provisional articles of peace were signed; but the arrival of the definitive treaty being delayed beyond the general expectation, and it being found necessary to diminish the public expenditures, Congress thought proper to pass the following resolution :

BY THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, May 26th, 1783.

On motion,

Resolved, That the Commander in Chief be instructed to grant furloughs to the non-commissioned officers and soldiers in the service of the United States enlisted to serve during the war, who shall be discharged as soon as the definitive treaty of peace is concluded, together with a proportionable number of commissioned officers of the different grades: And that the Secretary at War and Commander in Chief take the proper measures for conducting those troops to their respective homes, in such manner as may be most convenient to themselves and to the states through which they may pass; and that the men thus furloughed be allowed to take their arms with them.

CHARLES T HOMSON, Secretary.

Upon the promulgation of this resolution the subsequent address was presented to the Commander in Chief:

S I R,

IT is difficult for us to express the regret we feel at being obliged again to solicit your Excellency's attention and patronage. Next to the anguish which the prospect of our own wretchedness excites in our breasts, is the pain which arises from a knowledge of your anxiety on account of those men who have been the sharers of your fortunes, and have had the honor of being your companions through the various vicissitudes of the war. Nothing, therefore, but necessity could induce us to a representation which we know must give you concern.

Your Excellency has so intimate a knowledge of the condition of the army, as to render a particular delineation unnecessary. As you have been a witness of our sufferings during a war uncommon in its nature, and unparalleled in many circumstances attending it, so you are now, Sir, no less a witness of the unequal burthen which has fallen upon us,
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from the want of that provision, to which, from our assiduous and unremitting services, we conceive, we are entitled. Having recently expressed our sense of what was due to our distress---having repeated from your Excellency the confidence we had, that our accompts would be liquidated, the balances ascertained, and adequate funds provided for payment, previous to our being dispersed or disbanded---having seen, with pleasure, the approbation which Congress gave our reliance---it is with a mixture of astonishment and chagrin, that we view the late resolve of Congress, by which the soldiers for the war, and a proportionate number of officers, are to be furloughed without any one of those important objects being accomplished; and, to complete the scene of woe, are to be compelled to leave the army without the means of defraying the debts we have necessarily incurred in the course of service, or even of gratifying those menials, in the pittance which is their due; much less, to carry with us that support and comfort to our families, of which, from our long military services, they have been deprived. No less exposed then, to the insults of the meanest followers of the army, than to the arrests of the sheriff; deprived of the ability to assist our families; and without an evidence that any thing is due to us for our services; and, consequently, without the least prospect of obtaining credit for even a temporary subsistence until we can get into business---to what quarter can we look? We take the liberty to say, Sir, only to your Excellency: And, from the sincerity of our hearts, we do it, no less from a persuasion of the efficiency of your further efforts in our favor, than from the kind assurances you have been pleased to give us of your support.

To your Excellency then we make our appeal, and in the most solemn manner, from that abhorrence of oppression and injustice which first unsheathed our swords; from the remembrance of the common dangers through which we have passed; and from the recollection of those astonishing events which have been effected by our united efforts, permit us to solicit your further aid; and to entreat, that the order of the 2d instant, founded on the act of Congress of the 26th of May last, may be suspended or varied in its operation, so far, as that no officer or soldier be obliged to receive a furlough, until that honourable body can be apprised of the wretched situation into which the army must be plunged, by a conformity to it; that your Excellency will endeavour to prevail on Congress---nay, that, on the principles of common justice, you will insist that neither officer nor soldier be compelled to leave the field, until a liquidation of accompts can be effected, till the balances are ascertained, certificates for the sums due given, including the commutation of half pay to the officers, and the gratuity of eighty dollars to the soldiers, and till a supply of money can be furnished sufficient to carry us from the field of glory, with honor to ourselves and credit to our country. We still wish to believe, that that country, to which we have been

so long devoted, will never look with indifference on the distresses of those of her sons, who have so essentially contributed to the establishment of freedom, the security of property, and the rearing of an empire.

In the name and behalf of the Generals and officers commanding regiments, and corps in the cantonment on Hudson's river.

I have the honor to be,

With the highest respect,

Your Excellency's

Most obedient servant,

June 5, 1783.

W. H E A T H, Major-General, President.

To the foregoing Address, General Washington was pleased to return the following Answer, viz.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 6th June, 1783.

S I R,

BEFORE I make a reply to the subject of the address of the Generals and officers commanding the regiments and corps of this army, presented by yourself yesterday, I entreat, that those Gentlemen will accept my warmest acknowledgement for the confidence they have been pleased to repose in me; they may be assured it shall never be abused; and I beg they will be persuaded, that as no man can possibly be better acquainted than I am with the past merits and services of the army, so no one can possibly be more strongly impressed with their present ineligible situation, feel a keener sensibility at their distresses, or more ardently desire to alleviate or remove them,---but it would be unnecessary perhaps, to enter into a detail of what I have done, and what I am still attempting to do, in order to assist in the accomplishment of this interesting purpose,---let it be sufficient to observe, I do not yet despair of success; for I am perfectly convinced that the states cannot, without involving themselves in national bankruptcy and ruin, refuse to comply with the requisitions of Congress: Who, it must be acknowledged, have done every thing in their power to obtain ample and compleat justice for the army, and whose great object in the present measure undoubtedly was, by a reduction of expence to enable the Financier to make the three months payment to the army, which on all hands has been agreed to be absolutely and indispensibly necessary: To explain this matter, I beg leave to insert an extract of a letter from the Superintendent of Finance, dated the 29th ultimo.

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‘ It is now above a month since the Committee conferred with me on that subject, and I then told them no payment could be made to the army, but by means of a paper anticipation ; and unless our expenditures were immediately and considerably reduced, even that could not be done. Our expenditures have nevertheless been continued, and our revenues lessen ; the states growing daily more and more remiss in their collections. The consequence is that I cannot make payment in the manner first intended : The notes issued for this purpose would have been payable at two, four and six months from the date, but at present they will be at six months, and even that will soon become impracticable, unless our expences be immediately curtailed.

‘ I shall cause such notes to be issued for three months pay to the army, and I must intreat, Sir, that every influence be used with the states to absorb them together with my other engagements by taxation.’

Three days ago a messenger was dispatched by me to urge the necessity of forwarding these notes with the greatest possible expedition.

Under this state of circumstances, I need scarcely add that the expence of every day in feeding the whole army, will encrease very considerably, the inability of the public to discharge the debts already incurred, at least for a considerable time to come.

Although the officers of the army very well know my official situation, that I am only a servant of the public, and that it is not for me to dispense with orders, which it is my duty to carry into execution,---yet as furloughs in all services are considered as a matter of indulgence and not of compulsion ; as Congress, I am persuaded, entertain the best disposition toward the army, and as I apprehend, in a very short time, the two principal articles of complaint will be removed ;---until the further pleasure of Congress can be known, I shall not hesitate to comply with the wishes of the army, under these reservations only, that officers sufficient to conduct the men who choose to receive furloughs, will attend them either on furlough or by detachment; the propriety and necessity of this measure must be obvious to all, it need not therefore be enforced ; and with regard to the non-commissioned officers and privates, such as from a peculiarity of circumstances, wish not to receive furloughs at this time, will give in their names by twelve o'clock to-morrow to the commanding officers of their regiments, that on a report to the Adjutant-General, an equal number of men engaged for three years may be furloughed, which will make the saving of expences exactly the same to the public.

I cannot but hope the notes will soon arrive, and that the settlement of accompts may be compleated by the assistance of the Paymasters, in a very few days. In the mean time I shall have the honor of laying the sentiments

ments of the Generals and officers commanding regiments and corps, before Congress---they are expressed in such a decent, candid and affecting manner, that I am certain every mark of attention will be paid to them.

I have the honor to be,

With very great esteem,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Major-General HEATH.

The two preceding papers were enclosed in the following letter to his Excellency the President of Congress.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH, *June 7th, 1783.*

S I R,

I HAVE the honor to enclose to your Excellency, the copy of an address to me, from the Generals and officers commanding regiments and corps, together with my answer to it. These enclosures will explain the distresses which resulted from the measures now carrying into execution in consequence of the resolution of the 26th of May, but the sensibility occasioned by a parting scene, under such peculiar circumstances, will not admit of description.

The two subjects of complaint with the army appear to be, the delay of the three months payment which had been expected, and the want of a settlement of accounts---I have thought myself authorised to assure them, Congress had and would attend particularly to their grievances; and have made some little variations respecting furloughs, from what was at first proposed:---The Secretary at War will be able to explain the reason and propriety of this alteration.

While I consider it a tribute of justice on this occasion to mention the temperate and orderly behaviour of the whole army, and particularly the accommodating spirit of the officers in arranging themselves to the command of the battalions which will be composed of the three year's men; permit me to recal to mind all their former sufferings and merits, and to recommend their reasonable requests to the early and favourable notice of Congress.

9 JUL 64

I have the honour to be, &c.

